

HOW TO APPLY FOR CHIEF OF MISSION (COM) APPROVAL

Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Program for Afghan Nationals
Embassy of the United States of America – Kabul, Afghanistan

To apply for Chief of Mission (COM) approval for the SIV program, the applicant must have regular access to email internet service, have the ability to scan the all the required documents from the list below into PDF files, and be able to submit all the required documents via email to the following address: AfghanSIVApplication@state.gov. All information must be contained in **one email**. The email's subject line must contain the principal applicant's name as it is written in the passport and date of birth using the following format: DAY MONTH YEAR.

We recommend that you continue to use the same email address for all correspondence throughout the process.

Do not include family member information in the subject line. If a COM approval letter is issued, instructions will be provided on how to add a spouse and unmarried children, under age 21, to your case.

Please do not submit anything more than what is listed below unless we request you to do so. Specifically, do not submit photographs, certificates of appreciation, training certificates, resumes, or academic transcripts. These documents have no bearing on your COM approval application and will not be considered. You must submit all of the required documentation exactly as requested below or your application may be denied COM approval.

Applicants for COM approval must submit an application including, at a minimum, name, nationality, and an email address by December 31, 2015. However, only complete COM applications containing all required documents and information will be forwarded to U.S. Embassy Kabul for a decision by the Chief of Mission designee. Applicants who meet the December 31 deadline may provide additional required information or documentation following that date.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

1. Verification of 12 Months Employment in Afghanistan

If you were employed by or on behalf of the U.S. government:

A letter from your employer's Human Resources (HR) department confirming that you were employed by, or on behalf of, the U.S. government in Afghanistan between October 7, 2001, and September 31, 2015, for at least one year.

The letter must contain:

- Name;
- Date of birth;
- Copy of the contract between your employer and the U.S. government or a copy of the subcontract between your employer and the company that maintains a contract with the U.S. government;
- Job title;
- Job location;
- Start date (DD-MM-YYYY);
- End date (DD-MM-YYYY);
- Reason for separation if no longer employed; and
- Name of HR representative completing the HR letter, their signature, and contact information including email and phone (or alternate email if no longer with the organization).

Note: If you were directly employed by the U.S. government, you may submit a copy of the employment contract for consideration.

If you were employed by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF):

A letter from ISAF Headquarters Human Resources (HR) department confirming that you were employed by ISAF between October 7, 2001, and December 31, 2014, for at least one year. If you were directly hired by ISAF, this letter must be from ISAF Headquarters HR, regardless of where you were stationed in Afghanistan. If you were hired by an ISAF member nation, this letter must come from the department or agency that hired you. Note: Private contractors and subcontractors with ISAF or ISAF member nations, other than directly contracted by the United States, do NOT qualify.

The letter must contain:

- Name;
- Date of birth;
- English language copy (or English translation) of the contract between you and your employer. If you were hired on a personal services agreement (PSA) or a personal services contract (PSC), you must submit an English language copy of the agreement or contract;
- Job title;
- Job location;
- Start date (DD-MM-YYYY);
- End date (DD-MM-YYYY);
- Reason for separation;
- Name of HR representative completing the HR letter, their signature, and contact information including email and phone (or alternate email if no longer with the organization); and

- A description of your work that was specifically conducted in a capacity requiring you:
 - to serve as an interpreter or translator for U.S. military personnel while traveling off-base with U.S. military personnel stationed at ISAF, or
 - to perform sensitive and trusted activities for U.S. military personnel stationed at ISAF.

2. Letter of Recommendation

If you were employed by or on behalf of the U.S. government:

The letter must be from a direct U.S. citizen supervisor who knew you personally. It should cover the same period of employment covered by the HR employment verification. The letter should be dated and signed by your supervisor. It must contain:

- Name of applicant;
- Date of birth;
- Badge number;
- Job title;
- Job location;
- Start date of supervision;
- End date of supervision;
- Supervisor's name, title, corporate or U.S. government/military email address and phone number (provide alternate email address if the supervisor is no longer with the organization);
- Justification for recommending you for COM approval, i.e., that you provided faithful and valuable service to the U.S. government;
- The supervisor's explanation of any ongoing serious threat you have experienced or are experiencing as a consequence of your employment by or on behalf of the U.S. government;
- The supervisor's opinion on whether you pose a threat to the national security or safety of the United States; and
- That the recommender is your supervisor.

If the above recommendation is not possible to obtain from a U.S. citizen supervisor, you should provide a letter of recommendation signed by your non-U.S. citizen supervisor and co-signed by the U.S. citizen who is responsible for the contract. The U.S. citizen who co-signs must indicate that, based on his or her relationship with your contract or sub-contract supervisor, he or she is confident that the information provided is correct and also certifies that, to the best of his or her knowledge, you present no threat to the national security or safety of the United States. The recommendation must contain the U.S. citizen co-signer's current email address, and previous work email address if no longer with the organization, so he or she may be contacted if additional information is needed.

If you were employed by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF):

The letter must be from a member of the U.S. military who personally worked with you. The letter should be dated and signed. It must contain:

- Name of applicant;
- Date of birth;
- Badge number;
- Job title;

- Job location;
- Length of time the recommender has worked with the applicant, including dates;
- Capacity in which the recommender worked with the applicant;
- Recommender's name, title, rank, and U.S. government/military email address and phone number (provide recommender's alternate email address if it has changed since working with ISAF);
- Justification for recommending you for COM approval, i.e., that you provided faithful and valuable service to the U.S. government;
- The recommender's explanation of any ongoing serious threat you have experienced or are experiencing as a consequence of your employment by ISAF; and
- The recommender's opinion on whether you pose a threat to the national security or safety of the United States.

3. Form DS-157, Supplemental Nonimmigrant Visa Application

The form is available at <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/forms.html>. It is important that you follow the instructions below when completing the DS-157. This form must be completed in full and include start and end dates for all employment, and academic and military history.

4. Evidence of Afghan Nationality

A copy of your Afghan passport. If no passport is available, submit a copy of the Tazkera with English translation.

5. Biographic Data

Provide the following biographic data for the principal applicant:

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|-------------------------|--|
| • First name | • Place of birth |
| • Last name | • Gender |
| • All other names/alias | • Marital status |
| • Mother's name | • Email address and phone number |
| • Nationality | • Work location (base or city and province) |
| • Passport number | • Residence location (base or city and province) |
| • Date of birth | |

6. Statement of Threats Received as a Consequence of Your Employment by or on Behalf of the U.S. Government or by International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)

You must write, sign, and date a brief statement describing the threat you face or have faced as a result of your employment by or on behalf of the U.S. government in Afghanistan or by ISAF. Although statements provided by other parties may be included, you must also provide your own statement. Please provide as many details as possible.

Section 1219 of Public Law 113-66 provides that a credible sworn statement depicting dangerous country conditions, together with official evidence of such country conditions from the U.S. government, should be considered as a factor in a determination of whether an applicant has experienced or is experiencing an ongoing serious threat as a consequence of employment by the U.S. government.

7. Employee Badge

If available, a scanned copy of your most recent identification badge(s).

While this list specifies the documents required of all applicants, we may request additional information and documentation should questions arise during processing. Once you have submitted your complete COM approval application packet to AfghanSIVApplication@state.gov, please allow at least four to eight weeks for a response confirming that the National Visa Center has received your documents.

If you have further questions about the Afghan SIV program, please first review the information at <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/immigrate/types/afghans-work-for-us.html>. If your question is not answered, you may write to the Afghan SIV program at AfghanSIVApplication@state.gov.

ADDITIONAL TIPS TO PREVENT A DELAY IN PROCESSING YOUR APPLICATION

- Ensure the scanned copies of documents you provide are clear. Print your documents in black on white paper before scanning.
- Use the same spelling of your name on all documents and email correspondence. The spelling should match how your name is written in your passport. You should list aliases after your correct name.
- Submit a copy of your most recent Afghan passport.
- If possible, please submit copies of your employment badge(s).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING FORM DS-157 FOR THE SIV PROGRAM

Do not leave any boxes blank. All questions must contain an appropriate response or your application will be delayed. Please read and follow the below instructions carefully when completing the DS-157. If the form does not provide sufficient space for your response, you may use additional sheets of paper.

1. Enter your family name or surname as it appears in your passport, if any. Do not enter names that appear after d/o or s/o. If there is only one name, please enter that name here.
2. Enter your first name as it appears in your passport (if any); if there is only one name, enter FNU here.

3. Enter your full name in native alphabet (Dari) as it appears in your passport.
4. Enter your clan or tribal name. If you do not have a clan or tribal name, write 'none.'
5. Enter your spouse's full name. If you are unmarried, write 'N/A.'
6. Enter your father's full name as it appears in his passport.
7. Enter your mother's full name as it appears in her passport.
8. Enter the name, address and phone number of your U.S. contact person or organization in the following format: Sam Smith, 2100 Peach Street, Houston, TX 77003, phone (713) 555 1212. If you do not have a U.S. contact person or organization, write 'none.'
9. List all the countries you have visited during the past 10 years and the year of the visit. (e.g. China 2004, Italy 2007). If you have never traveled outside of Afghanistan, write 'none.'
10. List all the countries which have issued you a passport, including your current one. If you have never been issued a passport and do not hold a current passport, write 'none.'
11. Check the appropriate box.
12. List your two previous employers, not your current one. If you have had only one employer or no employer before your current job, you should explain that in the box. List your previous employers regardless of whether they have a connection to the United States. Please explain your job if you were self-employed. Please state very specifically your employer's name, location, and your job title.
13. List all professional, charitable, and social organizations in which you are or were a member. Do not write the names of employers. However, if one of your employers was also the Taliban government, at any level, write that here. If you have never been a member of an organization, write 'none.'
14. If your answer is 'yes', provide details of your specialized skill.
15. This refers to any military service, including Northern Alliance, Taliban, or any other.
16. This refers to all armed conflicts in which you have been involved, regardless of when it occurred. If your answer is 'yes,' provide details.
17. List the names and addresses of all the educational institutions you attended after elementary school. Include the month and year you started and finished. If you did not attend any educational institution after elementary school, you should state that in this box.
18. Check the appropriate box.